

Remarks of
ANNETTE M. SANDBERG, ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
to the
FMCSA INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT COURSE GRADUATION
FOR MEXICAN CMV INSPECTORS
NOGALES, ARIZONA
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Congratulations

I want to thank you all for being here today. I want to welcome our special guests from the Arizona State government: Roger L. Vanderpool, the Director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety; and Jack Lane, the Chief of the Highway Patrol Division. We're very pleased you could be with us today.

On behalf of President Bush and U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, I want to congratulate today's graduating class. I know you have worked hard. This has been an intensive course, demanding much of your personal time. We appreciate the sacrifice you and your families have made during your absence from home. Your presence today is a testament to your ability, your determination, and your commitment to professionalism. These qualities have served you well, and they will continue to serve you in the future.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize some of the people who made this possible. First and foremost, let me thank the Arizona Department of Public Safety for making their excellent training facility available. Let me also extend a special thanks to the U.S. instructors who volunteered to serve as coaches during these 2 weeks. This course would not have been possible without your help.

Partnership on Trade and Safety

As graduates of this training program, you are pioneers. You are the first from your agency to qualify as *teachers* of the North American Standard Inspection course. You will take this knowledge home to your colleagues to qualify them to perform driver and vehicle inspections. You are the foundation of Mexico's effort to independently perform motor carrier inspections according to North American Standards. Together, you are a vitally important link in the chain to creating harmony between our two nations' highway safety and trade policies.

This is critical as Mexico and the U.S. work toward implementing the truck and bus access provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Recently, President Fox, Canadian Prime Minister Martin, and President Bush met to promote a new initiative called the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. One important goal of this program is to improve the safety and efficiency of North America's transportation system, including the easing of bottlenecks at our borders and boosting motor carrier safety.

Your completion of the instructors' course brings us closer to reaching this goal. Your efforts will help save lives, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life across the borders of three great nations.

Shared Achievements

I also want to tell you how proud we are of the strong relationship we have built between FMCSA and the General Directorship of Federal Motor Carrier Transportation (DGAF), which has brought us much success. Our partnership has made the Mexican, Canadian, and U.S. commercial driver's license programs more compatible. We've improved the exchange of information on commercial driver's license status and motor carrier safety. And, together we've increased cross-border inspections, which have resulted in comparable out-of-service rates between Mexican and U.S. drivers and vehicles.

I want to take this opportunity to express my hope that we can expand these capabilities. For example, both our agencies would benefit greatly by sharing roadside inspection information on drivers and carriers.

Growing Demands on Public Safety

These efforts are so important because we at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) share with all of you the important mission of public safety. In 2003, nearly 43,000 people died on U.S. highways. Of that number, nearly 5,000 deaths were related to commercial motor vehicles. The goal we all share is making the highways safer in both of our nations. The U.S. DOT is committed to reducing the rate of fatalities on U.S. highways by 41 percent from 1996 to 2008. Working closely with all of you is critical to reaching this important goal.

But we know that more must be done because the demands on our work are increasing. The economies of both our nations are getting stronger. While this is encouraging, it is affecting our transportation systems profoundly. The miles traveled by all motor carriers are increasing steadily. As the pressures on our services grow, so does the need for innovation and partnership between Mexico and the U.S. That's why programs such as this one are so important.

I want to recognize FMCSA's training academy for rising to this challenge by establishing this innovative train-the-trainer course. When you go back to Mexico to put your knowledge and skills to practice, please keep in mind that the coaches and the training academy staff stand ready to continue to lend whatever assistance you find necessary.

Our partnership does not end with the completion of this course. With the designation of a National Training Coordinator within DGAF, we will have more opportunities to coordinate our training activities. I invite all of you—especially your Training Coordinator—to continue to rely upon our training academy and our agency as an educational resource. We invite you to visit us and learn more about the administrative implementing training programs. As qualified instructors, I also invite you to help us teach other inspection or instructor development courses in the U.S.

Closing

Congratulations again to the graduates. Your hard work is an example to all of us in public safety of what we can achieve when we work together toward a common goal.